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ABSTRACT

This report of a Colorado school district's program for student management on school buses includes descriptions of discipline procedures and the "Safe Ridership" program which is offered at the elementary and junior high levels and which of instructs students on ridership rules and regulations. Also included are copies of the relevant rules and regulations, a misconduct form, sample "Safe Ridership" program materials, and a school bus safety poster. (DCS)

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STUDENT MANAGEMENT ON SCHOOL BUSES

By

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Presented to:
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STUDENT MANAGEMENT ON SCHOOL BUSES

Pupil transportation in Colorado is voluntary. The statute states that if a school district elects to transport, as nearly all districts have, the district shall establish its own policies and procedures regulating the transporting of students. Special Education students are transported in accordance with Federal statutes and regulations.

Since transporting students is voluntary, perhaps more latitude is allowed the district in prescribing student management procedures. Board policies and procedures on student conduct can be more stringent.

In Adams County District 12, Northglenn, Colorado, a suburban district of the Denver metropolitan area, the total student management program is administered by the Transportation Department. The schools are not involved, except in instances where the department may ask for their assistance.

This has not always been the way student management has been administered in the district. Formerly, disciplining of bus students had been the responsibility of the school principal. About eight years ago, the principals asked that they be relieved of this responsibility and that student management be administered by the Transportation Department. The department was not opposed because discipline administration had become somewhat inconsistent amongst the various schools.

Under present Board policies and procedures, the Director of Transportation Services is charged with administering discipline to bus students charged with infractions of the rules and regulations prescribed by the department to govern student conduct while riding a district bus. Under this responsibility, most of the program has been delegated to the Departmental Trainer. This allows the Director to serve as an appeal source.

The rules and regulations for students riding district buses are supplied to all students and parents via the schools' handbooks. In addition, each student is handed a copy of the rules and regulations by the bus driver at the beginning of the school year. The rules and regulations are also posted in each district bus. The rules and regulations are shown in Figure I.

When a student breaks a rule, the driver warns the student and explains the reason for the rule and what will happen if he/she continues to incur infractions. If the student persists after the driver has given a warning, the driver will fill out the prescribed misconduct form and turn it into the Transportation Office. Before going to the written misconduct, the driver may call the student's parents and discuss the student's behavior. Often, the conversation with the parent will take care of the situation. Figure II displays a copy of the misconduct form used by District 12 drivers.

FIGURE I. SCHOOL DISTRICT 12 RULES AND REGULATIONS

School District No.12, Adams County
11285 Highline Drive
Northglenn, CO 80233

August, 1983

Dear Parents and Students:

COLORADO LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO TRANSPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS TO AND FROM SCHOOL, 22-32-113 COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, 1973.

The Board of Education of School District No.12 has authorized student transportation at district expense with the following guidelines:

1. Pupils are transported if they live beyond the distances established as maximum walking distance for specific grade levels, and their assigned school has not been designated as a "walk-in" school.
2. School attendance boundaries are based upon many considerations, and pupils may not always be assigned to the nearest school.
3. Pupils must conduct themselves in a manner which permits and promotes safe transportation of all pupil passengers.

The SAFE transportation of pupils, to and from school, is of the utmost importance. If a driver is to operate the school bus safely, it is necessary that passengers behave in a controlled, orderly manner. Pupil management has the objective of securing desirable passenger behavior. The school district will do its utmost to provide safe, clean and well-regulated buses. Passengers have a general responsibility to cooperate and abide by the established rules and regulations of the district. Bus drivers are not babysitters.

The key to the operation of a safe transportation system is two-fold:

1. Passengers provide the driver with an atmosphere which will allow him/her to direct full attention to safe driving.
2. Driver provides passengers with a uniform and fair application of the rules established by the district for transportation services.

Bus drivers are trained and directed to provide a favorable atmosphere for all passengers. Passengers' behavior is expected to promote this atmosphere by:

1. Showing respect for others—fellow passengers, drivers, sponsors, motorists, residents and property owners.
2. Obeying the established rules and regulations. These guidelines are set to control the collective behavior of students to prevent behavior which may be potentially dangerous to the life, safety, and comfort of all.

The acceptable behavior of pupil passengers is as follows:

A. AT THE BUS STOP:

1. Arrive on time, but not too early (five minutes before scheduled time).
2. Treat the adjacent residents' property with respect and consideration. Stand in line.
3. Have regard for the hazards and rights of motorists. Do not play or stand in the street.

FIGURE I. (Continued)

B. DURING LOADING AND UNLOADING PROCESS:

1. When crossing the street to a stopped bus, cross at least ten feet in front of the bus (NEVER behind the bus!).
2. *Use the front door–rear exit is to used for emergencies only.*
3. Wait for an approaching bus at least six feet from where the school bus is to come to a complete stop. NEVER rush toward a moving vehicle or crowd and push to board the vehicle. If you are not going to cross the street after leaving the bus, move back from the curb to allow the bus to continue on its route without danger to you.
4. Pupils and employees of the district are the only persons normally eligible to ride school buses, and other persons are eligible only when specially authorized by the Transportation Department.
5. Junior and senior high students must have bus pass visible and ready to present to driver upon boarding. NO PASS – NO RIDE.
6. Bus pass is required of every junior and senior high student for every ride.

C. ON THE BUS:

1. Obey the directions of the driver.
2. Take seats promptly and remain seated until time to unload, and the bus has come to a complete stop. Keep the aisles clear. Seats shall be assigned for all elementary and junior high pupils. Seats may be assigned for senior high students, at the discretion of the driver. Passengers, at the front of the vehicle, shall exit first when bus is being emptied.
3. The "noise level" permitted may consist of quiet talking only. When directed to be silent, respond immediately and completely. Passengers are required to be silent any time the driver turns on the interior lights, primarily at railroad crossings.
4. Windows may be open when and as directed or approved by the driver. Do not extend arms or head out of the window nor throw anything out of the window, since personal injury may occur.
5. Do not tamper with or damage the bus.
6. Eating, drinking and smoking on buses are specifically prohibited when passengers are being transported. Unnecessary litter and messes shall be cleaned up by the responsible person(s).
7. Flame or spark producing devices are not allowed on the school bus.
8. Glass and other articles which could result in danger to passengers shall not be transported on buses.
9. The following items are authorized to be carried on school buses when properly secured:
   a. School books and notebooks–to be placed on student's lap.
   b. Band instruments–to be placed on student's lap or on the floor between student's legs. Large items must be transported by other means. "Rule of Thumb"–Item cannot protrude into aisle, extend above seat back, or occupy space of another student.
   c. Lunch pails–to be placed on student's lap.
   d. Purses–to be placed on student's lap.

FIGURE I. (Continued)

Note: Animals/pets, living or otherwise, are strictly prohibited on vehicles transporting students.

10. Misrepresenting one's identity shall constitute misconduct.

Failure to comply with these procedures will result in receiving a misconduct.

One or two, (depending on severity), misconducts will result in withdrawal of transportation privilege. The Transportation Department is authorized and shall have the responsibility of withdrawing transportation privileges and so advising the respective school and the parents. Parents are asked to caution their children to cooperate and obey the student management rules. If the nature of the offense warrants further action, review of the case shall be undertaken by the Superintendent or designee.

Safety reasons require pupils to ride the assigned bus and route, and to load and unload at the assigned locations. Buses and drivers may vary due to temporary assignments and equipment availability, but both are normally assigned to specific routes. Unauthorized or unassigned passengers must obtain permission to ride by contacting the Transportation Department 48 hours in advance of ride.

If you have any questions, please contact the Transportation Department 452-6553.

FIGURE II. SCHOOL DISTRICT 12 MISCONDUCT FORM

PRINT CLEARLY

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 12, ADAMS COUNTY
MISCONDUCT REPORT

STUDENT NAME:_____ DRIVER NAME:_____ DATE:__/__/__
SCHOOL:_____ BUS STOP:_____
VEHICLE NO._____ ROUTE NO._____ TIME:_____ GRADE:_____

THE ABOVE STUDENT HAS MISBEHAVED AS DESCRIBED BELOW. SUCH BEHAVIOR IS CONTRARY TO STATE/DISTRICT RULE(S) OR REGULATIONS AND ARE CONSIDERED HAZARDOUS TO PASSENGER(S) AND/OR SAFE OPERATION OF SCHOOL BUS.

DRIVER COMMENTS OF INCIDENT OR MISCONDUCT:_____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

THIS IS THE_____INCIDENT AND REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING ACTION(S):

☐ NOTIFICATION TO PARENT AND COPY TO SCHOOL. YOUR COOPERATION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

☐ WARNING: STUDENT WILL LOSE PRIVILEGES NEXT INCIDENT.

☐ CONFERENCE WITH PARENT AND STUDENT AT TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT REQUIRED. PLEASE CALL FOR APPOINTMENT, 452-6553.

BUS PRIVILEGES WITHDRAWN ON_____UNTIL APPOINTMENT IS HELD.

☐ STUDENT'S BUS PRIVILEGES WITHDRAWN FROM:_____TO:_____, BOTH DATES INCLUSIVE.

Transportation Dept. Form N 3120 Rev. 1/82

When the first misconduct form is filed at the office, a copy of the misconduct will be mailed to the student's parents as a warning. At the elementary level, a second misconduct will require a conference of the student and parent with the representative of the transportation department. This conference may also include the driver, if the parent so requests. A specified time is set by which the conference must be held. If no attempt is made by the parent to schedule the conference within the specified time period, the student is suspended from riding the bus until such time as the conference is held. Any disciplinary action, if necessary, will be arrived at through the conference.

At the elementary level, a third offense requires that the student be suspended from riding the bus for a pre-determined time. First suspension is usually for three days. A copy of a misconduct requiring suspension is always sent to the parents by certified mail. Suspension will not begin until the sixth day after the misconduct is mailed. Any subsequent misconducts for a student require progressively longer periods of suspension.

At the secondary level, the procedures are the same as at the elementary level except a conference is not normally scheduled for the second misconduct, unless there are extenuating circumstances that would seem to necessitate a conference. A second misconduct normally will bring about a suspension. All suspensions include riding privileges for field trips, activity and athletic trips as well as to and from school.

Certain infractions do bypass the normal procedures. Such infractions as smoking, use of or possession of drugs or alcohol, fighting involving physical contact may result in the loss of riding privileges on the first misconduct, after parent notification. Student assault upon a driver and/or monitor bring about the immediate loss of riding privileges. In such instances, the parents are notified by phone. Assault situations are reported to the Board of Education and further action is taken at that level.

In order to help the driver with student management, the department inaugurated a "Safe Ridership" program which is offered at the elementary and junior high schools. The Departmental Trainer presents this program to individual classes at the schools. All students are included because all students ride buses at some time during the year. If not on to and from school routes, they will ride on field trips or activities.

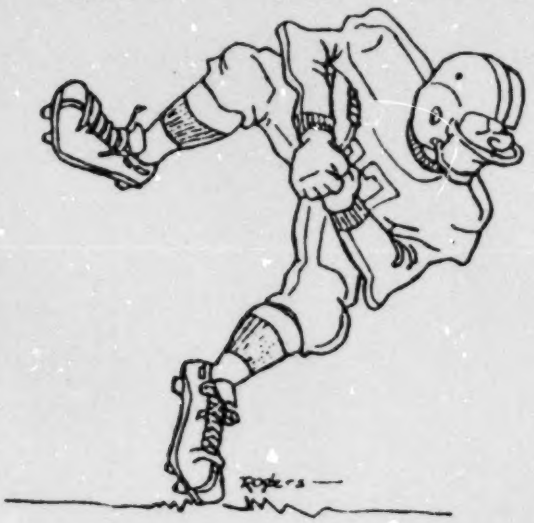
During the first year, the program was presented to all grade levels. Subsequently, the presentations have been and are presently presented to kindergarteners, fourth graders and seventh graders.

The "Safe Ridership" porgram is presented positively through transparencies, discussion and workbooks and does cover the rules and regulations and reasons for the rules and regulations. The same program is presented at all grade levels. The program materials are different as they are geared to the level at which they are used.

The theme of the program is the School Bus Safety Team. At the elementary level, Mr. Safety is making the presentation. At the junior high level, the "Coach and Referee" make the presentation. Figure III is a sample page from the elementary program materials. Figure IV is a sample page from the junior high program materials. Figure V is a poster that is posted in the bus so that the students see it as they enter the bus.

FIGURE III. A PAGE FROM ELEMENTARY MATERIALS

FIGURE IV. A PAGE FROM JUNIOR HIGH MATERIALS



Sooo..

Safe school bus rides mean a TEAM of people working together using the same safety rules.

WHO'S the MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER of the team?

IT'S YOU!

To do your job, you need...

INDEPENDENCE
- knowing what to do when you're on your own.

SELF-DISCIPLINE
- doing what's right and safe without being reminded.

TRAINING
- learning all you need to know to be a safe rider.

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FIGURE V. POSTER PLACED IN EACH BUS

1. Leave home early enough to arrive at your bus stop on time.
2. Wait for your bus in a safe place—well off the roadway.
3. Enter your bus in an orderly manner, and take your seat.
4. Follow the instructions of your school bus driver.
5. Remain in your seat while your bus is in motion.
6. Keep your head and arms inside the bus at all times.
7. Keep aisles clear at all times.
8. Remain quiet and orderly.
9. Be courteous to your school bus driver and fellow passengers.
10. Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus.

At each level, there is a workbook that goes along with the program materials. These workbooks include games and quizzes. Each student participating receives a workbook to use as reinforcement for the materials presented.

This system has worked quite well. At the elementary level, the percentage of second misconducts is low and rarely is there a third misconduct. At the senior high level, a second misconduct on a student is rare. Only at the junior high do we experience many second and third misconducts.

Some parents think the system is unduly harsh. Admittedly, the system is strict. Such parent complaints are countered by explaining that the safety of all students riding the district's buses has top priority and to ensure this, strong measures must be taken. In District 12, riding the school bus is not a right but a privilege.